



# The Call to Leadership

By Cynthia Coad, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

As supervisors and managers we are called to provide excellent leadership in all we do. The days of operating from a position of power and authority are gone. Today, we are called to create environments that engender open communication, joint problem solving, and a receptiveness to change. Further, it is incumbent on those of us in leadership roles to be the best we can be, and inspire achievement, success, and excellence in others. The extent to which we accomplish these things, has a direct impact on the success of the organization, and ultimately our own personal success.

Given this, it stands to reason that the success of the County of Orange as a business organization relies heavily on the quality of our leaders. The Board of Supervisors, County Executive Officer, and Department Heads look to you to provide that leadership by effectively implementing County policy and business decisions – even when you find it difficult to do so. We look to you, through your actions, decisions, and the manner in which you communicate with others, to provide the kind of leadership that will move the County forward.

Therefore, excellent leadership must be the acid test by which we judge all our decisions, actions, and communica-

tions. We must constantly examine our motives and leadership styles by asking: Do my actions, decisions, and communications support County policy and exemplify excellent leadership? Am I creating an environment that produces results and applauds accomplishment? Am I inspiring others to excellence? Am I accountable for my actions? If what we propose to do does not accomplish these things, we must revisit our approach and choose a more effective leadership style.

To support your efforts to provide the quality leadership so vital to our organizational success, and your own development, we are launching this monthly bulletin, **LEAD**. In **LEAD** you will find leadership tips, techniques, and best practices from the public and the private sectors that reflect the County philosophy. I encourage you to read these bulletins each month, share them with your staff, empower your staff to hold you accountable for incorporating the ideas you find in **LEAD**, and continue to be focused on using excellent leadership as the measure for all you do. I thank you for your efforts to provide quality leadership for the County of Orange, and encourage you to consistently seek means for bringing out the best in yourself and others.

*Leadership is everyone's responsibility. It's the behavior each of us exerts when we take responsibility for our actions and their consequences. It's the voice within us that calls out and says "take charge!" Most important, it's what we do to make a positive difference in our lives and make our world a better place.*

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## Resolve to be a Better Manager in 2001

It's a new year, and aside from your usual resolutions—lose weight, get organized, buy Microsoft—you might want to resolve to become a better manager. These resolutions should help:

- I resolve to do everything I can to make sure my employees are satisfied in their jobs.
- I resolve to build an atmosphere of trust, respect, and open communication throughout my organization.
- I resolve to give feedback appropriately—praising in public and criticizing in private.
- I resolve to show appreciation more frequently to all my employees.
- I resolve to help my employees be more successful through training and mentoring.
- I resolve to be a good role model to my employees and colleagues.
- I resolve to value employees' work/life balance.
- I resolve to clearly define my expectations so my employees will know exactly what the organization needs them to do.
- I resolve to be flexible.

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## Without Accountability, Your Team Will Fail

Success for a self-directed work team requires three factors: responsibility, authority, and accountability. All are important, but accountability can be the trickiest to achieve. If you're a team leader or facilitator, keep these basic principles in mind:

**1. Focus.** The team needs to know precisely what its goals are, how it can achieve them, and how it will measure success. To maintain focus, direct the team to:

- Describe its mission in detail and show how its activities support that mission
- Define each member's job as explicitly as possible
- Establish consistent performance standards for teammates
- Measure and analyze its own performance
- Hold regular planning sessions

**2. Influence.** The team needs authority and influence to get its mission done. Empower your team to:

- Participate in the formation of the organization's overall mission
- Analyze its own work practices and act on its findings in order to constantly improve
- Decide which suppliers to work with
- Make its own decisions about budgeting issues
- Provide feedback to individual team members
- Select new members and remove people who aren't performing

**3. Consequences.** The team has to confront both the positive and negative consequences of its actions. Instead of shielding the team, take steps to:

- Let the team receive direct, regular feedback from internal and external customers
- Allow the team to carry over the savings in its budget to the next budget period
- Avoid giving the team internal monopoly power (let other areas of the company choose whether they want to be served by the team)
- Link compensation and bonuses to team efforts and successes
- Let the team share in the organization's financial success

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## Decide Not to Change

You don't have to change just because the organization does. People prove this all the time. Just look around—maybe even glance in the mirror. You won't have to look far to find what we're talking about.

Here's how it goes. The organization announces that it will do something new and different. Some people don't like the looks of it, for whatever reasons, and decide they don't want any part of the program.

So they resist. Maybe consciously, or maybe without really stopping to think about it. Maybe they make a lot of noise and fight out in the open. Or maybe they take the sneaky approach and fight the changes quietly and behind the scenes. Whichever strategy they choose, though, they set themselves up for a tough emotional struggle.

The truth of the matter? People waste far more emotional energy desperately hanging on to old habits and beliefs than it would take for them to embrace the changes.

Does it make sense to assume that we can remain effective in a changing organization without changing ourselves? If the world is forcing organizations to do business differently, can we as individuals expect to succeed if we keep going at our jobs in the same old way?

Don't forget that you have a choice. Maybe you don't like the options you have to pick from, but you have a say—so in how you react to change.

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## Practice the 5 "A's" of Leadership

### Approachable

Listen to what others have to say. Make yourself accessible.

### Accepting

Keep an open mind. Good ideas can come from everyone.

### Acknowledging

Recognize the contributions of others, and let them know when they've done a good job.

### Accountable

Be responsible for yourself and the actions of others under your charge.

### Adaptable

Think about where your organization and your people need to be in the future, and make the adjustments necessary to get there.

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